



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/661,533	09/15/2003	Miwa Abe	300.1127	7846

21171 7590 10/31/2006

STAAS & HALSEY LLP
SUITE 700
1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

WILKINS III, HARRY D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1742

DATE MAILED: 10/31/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/661,533

Applicant(s)

ABE ET AL.

Examiner

Harry D. Wilkins, III

Art Unit

1742

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 September 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status

1. The prior rejection grounds have been withdrawn in view of Applicant's amendment to claim requiring the presence of potassium citrate (of both the mono- and tri-potassium variety) within the solution.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ushio et al (US 4,963,974) in view of Baker (US 3,917,885) and Nakazawa et al (US 4,717,459).

Ushio et al teach (see abstract and col. 4, lines 53-66) a non-cyanide solution for gold plating containing a gold salt and a complexing agent such as N-methylthiourea.

Ushio et al teach (see col. 8, lines 51-58) utilizing a pH adjuster at 0.09-1.0 mol/L. However, Ushio et al fail to teach utilizing a combination of mono-potassium citrate and tri-potassium citrate as the pH adjuster.

However, Baker teaches (see paragraph spanning cols. 3 and 4) that conventional preferred buffering agents (i.e.-pH adjusters) for electroless gold plating solutions included potassium citrate.

Art Unit: 1742

Nakazawa et al show (see Example 8) that it was known to utilize a combination of tripotassium citrate and monopotassium citrate as a buffering solution.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have selected potassium citrate (including both mono- and tri-potassium citrate) as the pH adjuster for the composition of Ushio et al because potassium citrate was known to be an effective buffering agent at basic pHs.. (Ushio et al utilized a basic pH.)

Regarding claim 2, Ushio et al teach (see paragraph spanning cols. 4 and 5) using halogenoaurate as a gold salt source.

Regarding claims 3 and 5, these claims relate to inherent properties of the solution, such that one of ordinary skill in the art would have expected any solution with the claimed additives would have had the same properties.

4. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ushio et al (US 4,963,974) in view of Baker (US 4,717,459) and Nakazawa et al (US 4,717,459) as applied above to claim 1 and further in view of Schmid et al.

Ushio et al fail to teach using thiouracil or 2-aminoethanethiol as the complexing agent.

However, Schmid teaches (see 2nd column of page 524) that cysteamine hydrochloride (cysteamine is a synonym for 2-aminoethanethiol, see article from chemfinder.com) formed strong Au-S bonds.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have substituted the cysteamine (2-aminoethanethiol) for the N-methylthiourea of Ushio et al since the cysteamine also formed complexes with gold.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-5 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

6. Further, with respect to the addition of tripotassium citrate and monopotassium citrate, Applicant states (see page 4, lines 31-35) that any conventional pH adjusting agents could be utilized, and thus, has failed to ascribe any unexpected result to the specific combination of these two agents as the pH adjusting compounds.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

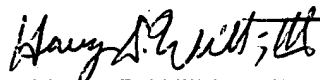
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 1742

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Harry D. Wilkins, III whose telephone number is 571-272-1251. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy V. King can be reached on 571-272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Harry D Wilkins, III
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1742

hdw